

Case 2883

***Procervulus* Gaudry, 1877 (Mammalia, Artiodactyla): proposed designation of *Antilope dichotoma* Gervais, 1849 as the type species**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the current understanding of the name *Procervulus* Gaudry, 1877 which is in established usage for a genus of Miocene cervoids. It is probable that Gaudry misidentified the single species that he included in the genus. It is proposed that *Antilope dichotoma* Gervais, 1849 be designated the type species, thereby also maintaining the usage of other names of distinct Miocene cervoid genera.

1. The specific name of *Antilope dichotoma* was made available by Gervais (1849, p. 549), who listed it and referred in a footnote to the distally bifurcated antler. Such an antler was subsequently described (vol. 1, p. 78; vol. 2, caption to pl. 23) and illustrated (vol. 3, pl. 23, figs. 4, 4a) by Gervais ([1850]). The latter work was dated 1848–1852 but surveys of currently published literature (Wagner, 1849, p. 3; 1850, p. 9; 1851, p. 9) have clarified the year of publication of its successive parts. The name *dichotoma* has been used consistently since publication for a species of Miocene cervoid or cervid with antlers bifurcated at the tip.

2. The genus *Procervulus* was founded by Gaudry (1877a, p. 88; 1877b, p. 555) for Miocene cervoids or cervids possessing distally forked antlers but no obvious coronet or burr to indicate seasonal shedding. Gaudry's publication as a book was dated 1878 on the title page. However, the 'dépôt legal' of the work was made in November 1877 and an entry in the *Bulletin de la Société Géologique de France*, (3)6: 151 recorded that Gaudry presented a copy of his work to a meeting of the society on 17 December 1877. The chapter on ruminants from the work also appeared in *La Revue Scientifique de la France et de l'Étranger*, (2)13(24): 553–567, dated 15 December 1877. The date 1877 is adopted here for the publication of Gaudry's work. Since it is not feasible to ascribe priority to either publication both are cited for the name *Procervulus*. Three of the four antlers illustrated by Gaudry (1877a, fig. 100; 1877b, fig. 32) had complete pedicels and demonstrated unambiguously the author's concept of the morphology to be found in his new genus. The illustrated antlers agreed morphologically with Gervais's *Antilope dichotoma* but Gaudry (1877a, p. 88; 1877b, p. 557, footnote) used the name *Cervus capreolus aurelianensis* Meyer in Laurillard, 1843 (p. 333) for the single species he placed in *Procervulus*.

C. aurelianensis is thus the type species of the genus by monotypy. Both Laurillard and Gervais ([1850], p. 86) noted that the name *aurelianensis* had been used in a manuscript by Meyer for some dental and antler pieces from Montabuzard, France, which were illustrated but not named by Cuvier (1823, p. 103, pl. 8, figs. 3–6).

3. The antlers of *Cervus aurelianensis* Laurillard, figured by Cuvier (1823, pl. 8, figs. 3, 4), are of uncertain identity within the CERVIDAE, whilst the illustrated upper dentition (Cuvier, 1823, pl. 8, fig. 6) is congeneric with *Dorcatherium* Kaup, 1833 (family TRAGULIDAE). Stehlin (1925, p. 88) observed that Cuvier's antlers probably came from a more advanced deer than those illustrated by Gaudry. He designated *A. dichotoma* Gervais as the type species of *Procervulus* but this, however desirable, was an invalid designation (see para. 2 above).

4. Gervais (1859, p. 151) had recorded Lartet's opinion that not only was *Cervus aurelianensis* possibly a species of the Miocene cervid *Dicrocerus* Lartet, 1851 but so also was the *Antilope dichotoma* antler illustrated by Gervais ([1850], vol. 3, pl. 23, fig. 4). We are confident, however, that the latter is correctly placed in *Procervulus*.

5. The name *Procervulus* has been used consistently for species having antlers similar to those illustrated by Gaudry (1877a, fig. 100; 1877b, fig. 32), and *A. dichotoma* is currently always included in the genus. Examples of usage include the works by Roman & Viret (1934), Stehlin (1937), Rinnert (1956), Viret (1961), Ginsburg & Crouzel (1976), Vislobokova (1983), Ginsburg & Bulot (1987) and Azanza (1993). Recognition of *C. aurelianensis* as the type species of the genus would render *Procervulus* a subjective synonym of one of the names used for more advanced Miocene deer, either a junior synonym of *Dicrocerus* Lartet, 1851, or a senior synonym of *Euprox* or *Heteroprox*, both of Stehlin (1928). The last three names are all in use. To maintain the established usage of *Procervulus* we propose that Stehlin's (1925) designation be ratified and that *Antilope dichotoma* Gervais, 1849 be designated the type species.

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to set aside all previous fixations of type species for the nominal genus *Procervulus* Gaudry, 1877 and to designate *Antilope dichotoma* Gervais, 1849 as the type species;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Procervulus* Gaudry, 1877 (gender: masculine), type species by designation in (1) above *Antilope dichotoma* Gervais, 1849;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *dichotoma* Gervais, 1849, as published in the binomen *Antilope dichotoma* (specific name of the type species of *Procervulus* Gaudry, 1849).

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